

CHAPTER III

OCCUPATION*

Before we proceed with the analysis, I shall first define the terms economically active, and, economically inactive. The former refers to those people who are engaged economically in any kind of activity. For our purpose, it includes farmers, housewives, houseworkers, labourers, Teachers, Rubber-Tapper and Gate-Keeper.

The latter term refers to those who are not engaged economically temporary, or, permanent. Under this group all the unemployed people, students and those between the ages of 0-9, children aged 8 and below are considered too young for any economic activity, but, at the same time do not attend school for one reason, or, another. After making ourselves clear of the two terms, we will now proceed with our analysis, with reference to Table 16.

We will tackle one block at a time. Taking Block K, there are 217 people economically active out of a total population of 373. The remaining 156 are economically inactive.

From the active group, 111 are farmers, 53 housewives, 43 houseworkers and 3 labourers. Thus in this block farming is the most common occupation. However, this is quite expected since this area is almost entirely devoted to padi-farming.

In the inactive group, there are 76 students, 80 children under 8, and 3 unemployed. Thus, Students and Children aged 8 and below form the greater proportion of the inactive.

In Block C, the total number of people living in the block is 319. Breaking this figure into the various occupations, we find that in the economically active group of 191, there are 124 farmers, 43 housewives, and 24 houseworkers.

There 128 economically inactive people in this block, 43 are students, 79 aged 8 and below, and 6 are unemployed. We can safely conclude that a very high proportion of the inactive are between these ages. In other words, most of the dependants are children. In fact, all are children except 6 unemployed people.

In Block K, with a population of 226, 117 are economically active. There are 51 farmers, 35 housewives, 13 houseworkers, 3 labourers, 2 teachers, 2 rubber-tappers and 1 gate-keeper. We notice again as in other blocks, about half are farmers.

*In this context when we speak of occupation, we consider not only people of 'working age' but the whole population, and the percentages are calculated from the total population.

OCCUPATIONAL GROUPS BY BLOCKS

	K	Q	R	U	Total
Farmer	111	124	51	25	311
Student	76	43	58	13	190
Housewife	53	43	35	6	137
Housework	47	24	13	1	85
Children aged 8 and below*	80	79	57	16	232
Unemployed	3	6	4	2	15
Labourer	2	-	3	-	5
Tin Mine Labourer	1	-	-	-	1
Teacher	-	-	2	-	2
Rubber-Tapper	-	-	2	-	2
Gate-Keeper	-	-	1	-	1
Total	373	319	226	63	981

* Nil: children aged 8 and below and are inactive.

One hundred and nine are economically inactive in this block, 58 are students, 57 children aged 6 and below, and 4 unemployed. Again almost all except 4, are children in the inactive group.

Finally, Block U, out of 63 people residing there, 32 are economically active, and 31 economically inactive. In the active group there are 25 farmers, 6 housewives, and 1 houseworker. In the other group, 13 are students, 16 ill, and 2 unemployed persons.

Taking all the blocks together, there are 544 economically active people in the area compared to 437 inactive people. In my opinion the dependency problem in this area is not as serious as it seems at first glance. I based my judgement on two factors. First, we must consider that of a population of 981, only 15 people are unemployed. This is a very minor proportion of the population either in percentage, or, absolute terms. Second, out of 422 economically inactive people, excluding the unemployed, 232 are between the ages of 0-9, too young for any sort of work, but, because of misfortune, or, other reasons do not attend school; 190 are students, except 1 are between the ages of 5-15. Thus we can draw the conclusion that 421 people in the economically inactive group are between the ages of 0-15. Hence, the inactive group does not imply that they are unemployed because there is no job available, but, owing to the fact that they are still too young to be employed economically. Therefore, the unemployment situation in this area is not at all bad, or, serious. Finally, we can say that the dependency problem is not grave, or, serious in anyway.

Occupation by Ethnic Groups

In this analysis, the figures in Table 17, are broken down further into ethnic groups, but, for this, the analysis would be the same.

Of a total Malay population of 451,253 are economically active, and 198 are economically inactive. This comes to 56.05, and 43.94, active and inactive respectively.

Looking at the Javanese, on the other hand, out of 530 total population, 291 are economically active, 239 economically inactive. This is 54.87, and 45.13, active and inactive respectively.

There are 145, or, 32.13, Malay farmers, and 166, or, 31.31, Javanese farmers. In all there are 311 farmers which is about 31.71, of the whole population. From this figure, we can say that farming is the most widespread occupation in this area.

In absolute terms, the Javanese farmers exceed that of the Malays by 21.

TABLE 17

OCCUPATION BY ETHNIC GROUPS FOR ALL BLOCKS

	Ethnic Groups					
	Malays		Javanese		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Farmer	145	32.13	166	31.31	311	31.71
Student	79	17.56	111	20.92	190	19.37
Housewife	60	13.30	77	14.51	137	13.97
Housework	38	8.42	47	8.86	85	8.66
Children aged 8 and below	113	25.05	119	22.43	232	23.65
Unemployed	6	1.33	9	1.80	15	1.53
Labourer	5	1.11	-	-	5	0.51
Tin Mine Labourer	1	0.22	-	-	1	0.10
Teacher	1	0.22	1	0.19	2	0.20
Rubber-Tapper	2	0.44	-	-	2	0.20
Gate-keeper	1	0.22	-	-	1	0.10
Total	451	100.00	530	100.00	981	100.00

(Note: Between the ages of 0-9, those who are not engaged in anything considered as Nil, while those who are above this age group if they are not working then they are considered as Unemployed.)

Nil: Children aged 8 and below and are inactive.

Among children under 8, 113 are Malays, and 119 are Javanese. This is 23.65, of the whole population.

Only 6 Malays are unemployed, and 9 Javanese. The major economically active groups are farming with 311 people, housewives 137 and housework 65. In the inactive groups, the major ones are students with 190, ill with 232. The other occupational groups are very minor to be considered each by itself.

To conclude on this analysis, we can say that farming is the most widespread occupation in this area. This is not surprising but in fact, befitting to the area as an area of padi-farming, on the other hand, unemployment is not in bad situation, but, forms a very insignificant problem.

Occupations by Age and Sex

This is the last analysis on occupations. In Table 16, the figures are further broken down into age and sex.

In the farming occupation, a great number of the farmers are males. In absolute terms, there are 244 males and only 67 females. Hence, there are 177 more male farmers than the female farmers. Most of the farmers are found between the ages of 10-14, and 15-19 in both cases. In the other age groups, the number of farmers are quite evenly distributed relatively.

Dealing with the next one which is an inactive group in the economic sense, there are 113 male students, and 77 female students. The males exceed the females by 36 persons. All, except one, of the students are concentrated between the ages of 5-19. But 160 of the students are concentrated between 5-15. In all there are 190 students in the area. Whether we can say that the level of literacy is high, or, low is quite difficult for the simple reasons that we do not know how many years they have been in school. Another difficulty is to classify the people into educated and non-educated group. The thing is can we classify a person as being educated when he has had only one year of formal education? Or, when do you consider a person educated? I think we should leave this matter alone, as this is a very controversial issue, and to pursue it any further would only result in lengthy discussion which means that we have digressed from the subject of this exercise.

Concerning housewives there is not much to be discussed. However, there is one point that I would like to raise, that is, the people (females) get married at quite an early age. There 16 housewives between the ages of 10-19, and 23 between the ages of 20-24.

The distribution of the housewives between the various age groups from 10 onwards is quite even, but, the tendency is to dwindle in number in the older groups.

TABLE 18

OCCUPATIONAL GROUPS BY AGE AND SEX

Age Groups		0-4	5	10	15	20	25	30	35	40	45	50	55	60	65	Total
Farmer	M	-	-	20	36	34	17	20	15	24	13	10	7	22	17	244
	F	-	-	6	19	16	8	3	7	4	1	1	1	-	-	67
Student	M	-	58	50	4	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	113
	F	-	44	28	5	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	77
Housewife	M	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	F	-	-	2	14	23	16	25	11	17	7	14	3	4	1	137
Housework	M	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
	F	-	5	36	26	7	2	-	1	1	2	1	1	2	-	84
Children aged 8 and below	M	63	32	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	115
	F	90	27	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	117
Unemployed	M	-	-	3	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	3	7
	F	-	-	3	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	2	2	8
Labourer	M	-	-	3	4	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	5
	F	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Tin Mine Labourer	M	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
	F	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Teacher	M	-	-	-	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2
	F	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Rubber-Tapper	M	-	-	-	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2
	F	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Gate-Keeper	M	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	1
	F	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total	M	63	91	74	48	26	17	20	25	25	13	10	7	23	20	492
	F	90	76	75	63	46	26	28	19	22	10	17	5	8	3	489

There is only one male doing housework. This occupation is implied to mean a person who helps around the house and various chores. There are 84 females, this is not surprising as it is a custom among the Malays and Javanese to train the daughters to housework like cooking, cleaning the house, looking after babies and various other household daily chores. Most of the houseworkers are concentrated between the ages of 10-19. In fact, 62 of them are found in this group. The other age groups have smaller number between 1-7 in each group.

Finally, we come to the last significant inactive group. In all there are 232 people who more or less are idle, and, not engaged in anything in particular. All of them are found between the ages of 0-9. In my opinion, at this age they are too young to be engaged in any specific economic activity. At this age, they should be in school, but, because of financial difficulties they can't afford to go to school. Of course, there may be other reasons, however, I consider this as the chief factor that hinders them from schooling.

The other occupational groups form quite a minority to be considered each one of them at one time.

The other occupational groups form quite a minority by itself. Therefore to consider them one at a time is unnecessary. We have two teachers, two rubber-tappers, one gate-keeper, six labourers and 15 unemployed. The question of unemployment and dependency ^{have} already been discussed much earlier, hence, I would not pursue the subject any further.

In studying the distribution of occupations in the whole area, one can actually draw a conclusion on the dependency problem. In this area, however, we have seen that out of 981 total population, 544 are economically active, and 437 economically inactive. In our analysis previously, I draw a conclusion in that the dependency problem in this block is not serious by taking into view that 421 people in the economically inactive groups are between the ages of 0-15, an age at which they are not suitable for any specific economic activity (as far as this area is concerned); secondly, I considered the unemployment situation is not at all bad. However, this conclusion is true if there are actually 544 economically active people. However, if we break this figure down, we will find that the economically active group is much smaller. Taking sex into consideration, we find that there are 288 females in this group. At this juncture, let us tackle the points one by one. First, there are 67 farmers (female) in the whole area. In my opinion, the females even though classified as farmers, do not actually contribute much to the incomes of the families. They are more or less, helpers in the farms. In other words, they help their husbands, or, fathers, to work in the field. They only help whenever possible. However, I am not saying that all are in this category because there are some who are really

farmers. But I must point out the fact, that the real bread-winners of the families are the males. It is on them that they really hang on; they are the one the families depend on.

Another point is that those classified under Houseworkers are in the true sense just helping around in the house. Frankly, I do not believe that they really contribute much to the families' budget. In fact, they are mostly girls between the ages of 10-19. Actually, 62 of them are between these ages.

Therefore, we are now left with 256 males who in the true sense are earning something for their families. They are the real bread-winners. Of course, we do not overlook the fact, that at least 20, or, 30 are the sons of the farmers helping in the farm. In other words, they are farm-helpers. This group too does not contribute much economically towards the families' budget. Hence, the figure now stands at 226.

Thus, about 755 people in the whole area are depending on 226 for their support. Looking at this point now, I consider the dependency problem is indeed serious. Even the fact, that 421 are children, and only 15 are unemployed cannot counterbalance the seriousness of the problem. The dependency ratio is 1:3.35. In other words, about three people are depending on one. Thus 76.97% approximately of the whole population are dependants. This indeed is a serious problem of dependency. This may be the reason why so many children about 232 are not schooling, and about 62 are doing housework. Of course, out of the 232 who are idle, 173 are between the ages of 0-4. Thus about 121 children of school-going age are not in school. Besides these there are more who help in the farm, just to help since they are not doing anything. This come to about 30 of them, who should be in school.

Conclusively, after considering all these point, I am inclined to take a different view. However, I am not saying my former view was wrong because if my assumption that 544 are economically active, then my former conclusion is quite right. But now with further assumptions, I find that only 226 are real bread-winners. If this is true then of course, the dependency problem calls for a serious view, and remedy, since it is already in bad situation.

Most of these farm helpers and houseworkers are disguised employment, in other words, they do not contribute anything substantial to the incomes.